

PLAN SUMMARY

The Nevada State Water Plan

Plan Title: The Nevada State Water Plan. (It consists of five parts. *Summary; Part 1 - Background and Resource Assessment; Part 2 - Water Use and Forecasts; Part 3 - Water Planning and Management Issues; and Appendices.*)

Type: . Natural Resources (Strategic, long range water plan, with the use of predictive models to forecast future water use statewide)

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Plan Description: (Purpose, Goals and Guiding Principles)

The legislature determines that the purpose of the state's water plan is to assist the state, its local governments and its citizens in developing effective plans for the use of water (NRS 540.011). The plan addresses surface and ground water resources for consumptive use as well as water conservation, water quality and quantity relationships, integrated surface-ground water systems, and water for wildlife/environmental purposes and watershed planning. The goals of the plan include:

Water Supply. Enough water of sufficient quality for future generations.

Water Rights. Protection of existing water rights.

Economic Efficiency. The preferential use of water for greatest economic gain to Nevada.

Conservation. More conservation and less waste of water.

Water Quality. Protection and enhancement of water quality.

Rural Water Supplies. Protection of water supplies for current and future development in rural areas.

Environmental Quality. Protection and enhancement of the environment.

Efficiency. Agency actions which are coordinated and integrated to save money and time, reduce duplication in projects and services, address gaps in resource protection, and result in better decisions.

Decision Making. Less litigation and more cooperative decision making to resolve water resource issues.

Effectiveness. More informed resource decision making with a greater awareness of aesthetic, cultural, and ecological values.

Sound Science. Water resource projects which are technically, environmentally and economically sound.

Public Involvement. A better educated citizenry and more public participation in water resource decision making.

Quality of Life. A higher quality of life for all Nevadans.

Planning/Guiding Principles:

All water within the state belongs to the public and its use is subject to a system of water rights administered by the State Engineer, by state and federal court decrees and by regulations.

Public education and public input is vital to statewide water resources planning.

The State Water Plan should integrate water supply, water quality, water use and environmental issues, and should be used to guide decisions which affect water resources in the state.

The State Water Plan by design should be “growth neutral.”

Water right owners are entitled to buy, sell or trade their water rights to others under free market conditions. However, changes to the point of diversion, or place or manner of use must be approved prior to change according to state water law, decrees and regulations.

The water resource needs of future generations should be protected by balancing economic goals with social, aesthetic, cultural and ecological values.

Water resource projects should be technically, environmentally and economically sound.

The State Water Plan should help integrate and coordinate the water planning and management activities of local, state and federal agencies.

The relationship between surface and ground water must be recognized in the State Water Plan.

Water conservation is an important component in the planning and management of Nevada’s water resources.

Watershed planning efforts should be encouraged and should include representatives of all agencies, municipalities, political subdivisions, water users and others with an interest.

Geographic Scope: -- Statewide (The 1999 State Water Plan characterizes water resources and development statewide. In the future, however, the preferred planning unit and geographic scope will be river basins and watersheds within the state. Interstate planning is already an important consideration, and may become more so in the future.)

Legislative Authority and/or Administrative Policies: Statutory Authority: NRS 540.101.

Directs the DWP to develop a state water plan for the use of water resources in the state. The DWP shall coordinate with local government and local government shall cooperate in the development of the plan. The water plan must include provisions to protect water for development in rural areas, giving consideration to the economy and quality of life, and other relevant factors. Legislative policy: NRS 540.011. It is the policy of the State of Nevada to recognize and provide for the protection of existing water rights and also to encourage efficient and non-wasteful water use. The legislature recognizes: the critical nature of the state's limited water resources and its relationship to increasing demands due to population growth; the relationship between water quantity and quality of resources and the necessity of considering both factors simultaneously in water planning; and the importance of water planning that is based upon identifying current and future water needs.

Cooperating Agencies: State. A Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Steering Committee was set up, consisting of the Director and Assistant Director of the DCNR, Administrators of the Divisions of Water Resources, Water Planning, Environmental Protection, Wildlife, State Lands, and Programs in the DCNR, as well as planners from those agencies. Other agencies involved are the Division of State Parks, Division of Forestry, the Division of Agriculture in the Department of Business and Industry, and the Division of Health in the Department of Human Resources.

State/Federal. In 1994 a 20- member interagency technical working group composed of state and federal agencies met over an 11- month period to frame issues, generate ideas, develop options and otherwise contribute to the preparation of the 1995 *Draft State Water Policy*. Federal agencies contributing to the development of the *State Water Plan* are the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Local/Regional. Cooperating local and regional agencies include Southern Nevada Water Authority, Washoe County Regional Water Commission, Carson Water Subconservancy District, 16 of the 17 County Commissions in Nevada, irrigation and flood control districts, and several county water planning commissions.

Participating Stakeholders: In addition to the cooperating agencies, many other stakeholders participated in Plan development. The list includes nongovernmental organizations (e.g., Nevada Wildlife Federation, the Nevada Farm Bureau Federation), industry trade groups (e.g., Nevada Mining Association, Southern Nevada Homebuilders Association), a research institution, businesses and interested individuals.

Date Completed: Completed March 1999. Status report to legislature due February 2001. Next plan update - not determined.

Planning Process & Data Collection: The process for public communication and participation developed as work on the Water Plan progressed. In 1994 and 1995, DWP hosted twenty (20) public workshops for education and issue scoping purposes. Several open meeting were held by the Advisory Board on Water Resources Planning and Development during the preparation of Plan elements. County commissions also held open meetings during which Plan elements were presented. During these meetings, interest organizations and individuals presented comments about the developing Plan. Public comment on both the June 1998 partial draft Plan and the 1999 public review draft Plan was solicited in July 1998 and in February 1999, respectively. The drafts were sent to a mailing list, posted on the DWP homepage, and presented in several workshops held around the state. The State Legislature also held committee hearing on the public review draft Plan during the 1999 legislative session.

Date Types Required. Historic and current water use and trend data are compiled or calculated. Future use amounts are predicted from using historic and current water use and trend data. Hydrologic, demographic and socioeconomic data are used in calculations and models to derive water use factors and forecast future water withdrawals. Water use data sources are a mix of measured and estimated values. Water use data includes withdrawals and consumptive use of surface and ground water resources in the following user categories: both self-supplied and public supplied domestic, commercial, industrial, and thermoelectric use categories, as well as self-supplied mining, irrigation, livestock, and public uses & losses. Except for mining and thermoelectric categories, water withdrawal projections for the different use categories are calculated using a forecast of key socioeconomic variables (i.e., population, employment, irrigated acres) multiplied by a water use factor. See Parts 3.1D and 3.5B of the State Water Plan for more information on issues related water use measurement and estimation and on data collection and management.

Data Sources. Data sources include the DWR, DWP, DEP, U.S. Geological Survey, Southern Nevada Water Authority, Washoe County Regional Water Resources, Desert Research Institute, Sierra Pacific Power Company,

Monitoring Programs. Routine monitoring of water quantity and quality is primary performed by the DWR, U.S. Geological Survey and DEP.

Natural Resource or Environmental Indicators. General, long range goals have been set forth (see Goals, above) in the State Water Plan. However, more specific indicators describing quantitatively or qualitatively the conservation status or the sustainable use status of Nevada's water resources have not been developed at this time.

Funding Sources: The State General Fund was the budget source to pay costs incurred for State Water Plan development.